

Application No. 10/811,168
Filed: March 26, 2004
TC Art Unit: 3677
Confirmation No.: 1995

AMENDMENT TO THE DRAWINGS

Figures 1a ~ 2A have been amended to include a legend of
PRIOR ART. Entry and acceptance of the amendments shown in the
attached Replacement Sheets is respectfully requested.

Application No. 10/811,168
Filed: March 26, 2004
TC Art Unit: 3677
Confirmation No.: 1995

REMARKS

In the most recent Office Action, claims 1-16 were pending. Claims 1-16 were subject to a restriction/election. Claims 2, 6-7, 11, and 14 are withdrawn from consideration. Claims 1, 3-5, 8-10, 12-13 and 15-16 are rejected.

In response, claims 4-5 and 7 are canceled. Claims 1 and 8 are amended. New claims 17-23 are added. Accordingly, claims 1-3, 6 and 8-23 are pending in the application. No new matter is added.

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the thorough search and consideration of the present application, and responds to the comments in the Office Action as follows.

Election/Restrictions

The Office Action states that the application includes claims directed to different species that are patentably distinct. Claims 1 and 8 are considered generic. Applicant hereby confirms the election of species III drawn to Figs. 5-7 and 10-11, directed to claims 1, 3-5, 8-10, 12-13, and 15-16. Claims 2, 6-7, 11 and 14 are withdrawn from consideration. In addition, claim 7 is canceled. Claims 2, 6, 11 and 14 are maintained in the application in the event of the allowance of a generic claim. In

-13-

WEINGARTEN, SCHURGIN,
GAGNER & LEBOVICI LLP
TEL. (617) 542-2290

Application No. 10/811,168

Filed: March 26, 2004

TC Art Unit: 3677

Confirmation No.: 1995

the event a generic claim is allowed, Applicant requests rejoinder of the non-elected claims and their consideration on the merits.

Election of species III, directed to claims 1, 3-5, 8-10, 12-13 and 15-16 was made with traverse. In addition, to being entitled to a reasonable number of species, which applicant believes is reflected in the drawings and claims of the present application, it is believed that a search on the elected species covers all species embodiments. Applicant further respectfully submits that the consideration of all species, and the claims directed thereto, does not place any additional burden on the examination process. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the restriction requirement be reconsidered and withdrawn.

In the alternative, Applicant respectfully requests that the presently pending withdrawn claims be maintained in the application pending further consideration of the elected claims.

Drawings

The Office Action states that Figs. 1a-2a should be designated with a legend indicating that the drawings reflect old subject matter. Applicant has amended the drawings to overcome the objection by adding the legend "PRIOR ART" to the relevant

Application No. 10/811,168
Filed: March 26, 2004
TC Art Unit: 3677
Confirmation No.: 1995

figures. Entry of the corrections to the drawings is respectfully requested as overcoming the objection to the drawings.

Specification

The Office Action states that the disclosure is objected to for a number of informalities. Applicant has reviewed the specification and made corrections based on the helpful suggestions from the Examiner to overcome the objection. Entry and withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. §35 U.S.C. §102(b)

The Office Action states that claims 1, 3-5, 8-10, 12-13 and 15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Anscher (U.S. Patent No. 5,855,057. In particular, the Office Action states that Anscher teaches each and every element of the rejected claims. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

The disclosure by Anscher appears to teach a reversible buckle that has a number of cooperative engagement structures for securing the clasped buckle together to withstand high loading forces without failing. That is, Anscher appears to show a plug with engagement lugs on both sides of a flexible section or plate, each of which cooperatively engage ledges or shoulders in the

Application No. 10/811,168
Filed: March 26, 2004
TC Art Unit: 3677
Confirmation No.: 1995

mating socket portion of the buckle. By providing engagement structures on both sides of the flexible sections or plate, that are each secured with a ledge or shoulder, the buckle by Anscher provides a secure engagement that resists high loading forces to remain clasped when subjected to a higher range of loading.

The present invention recited in claims 1 and 3 calls for a first catch and latch with a second latch or catch on a respective opposing side of the cavity or central arm that engages the first catch or latch dependant upon different relative orientations of the plug and socket. That is, the second latch or catch engages a single first catch or latch that depends upon the orientation of the buckle, rather than an alternate latch or catch as indicated by Anscher. The buckle disclosed by Anscher indicates that the two lugs engage different ledges or shoulders in the socket, dependent upon relative orientation. Indeed, the lugs on the arms or plates disclosed by Anscher are always engaged with a ledge or shoulder of the socket, regardless of relative orientation of the plug and socket. Anscher appears to specifically focus on this arrangement, so that increased loading force may be tolerated by the buckle where every lug and shoulder or ledge is engaged, independent of orientation of the plug and socket.

Application No. 10/811,168

Filed: March 26, 2004

TC Art Unit: 3677

Confirmation No.: 1995

Accordingly, claims 1 and 3 of the present invention recite a number of elements that are not disclosed in the reference by Anscher. Because the cited prior art fails to disclose these elements, Applicant submits that a rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) can not be maintained.

In addition, claim 3 depends upon and further limits claim 1 and is thought to be allowable for the same reasons as claim 1, and also because of the further limitations recited in the dependent claim. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the rejection of claims 1 and 3 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by Anscher be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Claim 8 of the present application recites first and second engagement parts with a functionally symmetrical counterpart to one of the first and second engagement parts. When the first and second engagement parts are cooperating, the counterpart is free from engagement, and when the counterpart is engaged with one of the first or second engagement parts, the other of the first and second engagement parts is free from engagement. These limitations are not found in the disclosure by Anscher, since, as discussed above, Anscher calls for all locking lugs and shoulders or ledges to be engaged without regard to orientation of the plug

Application No. 10/811,168

Filed: March 26, 2004

TC Art Unit: 3677

Confirmation No.: 1995

and socket. Accordingly, claim 8 recites a number of elements that are not taught in the cited prior art reference by Anscher.

Claims 9-10, 13 and 15 ultimately depend upon and further limit claim 8, and are believed to be allowable for the same reasons as claim 8 and additionally because of the further limitations recited in each dependant claim. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the rejection of claims 8-10, 13 and 15 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by Anscher be reconsidered and withdrawn.

The Office Action states that claims 8 and 15-16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Niewiadomski (U.S. Patent No. 6,662,414). In particular, the Office Action states that the disclosure by Niewiadomski teaches each and every element recited in claims 8 and 15-16. Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection.

The disclosure by Niewiadomski appears to teach male plug configurations that engage connection-establishing members in a female socket. The configurations on the male plug, or tang ends, appear to be engaged by a pair of connection-establishing members, or shoulders in the female socket. Each pair of shoulders appears to engage opposing sides of a single tang end from the male plug. As with the disclosure by Anscher, it appears that for every

Application No. 10/811,168
Filed: March 26, 2004
TC Art Unit: 3677
Confirmation No.: 1995

engagement structure shown by Niewiadomski, there is a cooperating engagement structure when the buckle is clasped.

In accordance with the present invention, claim 8 recites an engagement structure counterpart that engages one or the other of cooperative engagement parts, so that the non-engaged engagement part is free from engagement. The disclosure by Niewiadomski fails to teach that any of the engagement structures should be free when there is an engagement of the buckle parts in any relative orientation. Accordingly, claim 8 recites elements not disclosed in the reference by Niewiadomski.

Claims 15 and 16 ultimately depend upon and further limit claim 8, and should be allowable for all the same reasons as claim 8, and also because of the further limitations recited in each dependent claim. Applicant therefore respectfully submits that the rejection of claims 8 and 15-16 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as anticipated by Niewiadomski is overcome, and respectfully requests that it be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Conclusion

New claims 17-23 are added to further specify subject matter that applicant has a right to claim. Entry and consideration on the merits is respectfully requested.

Application No. 10/811,168

Filed: March 26, 2004

TC Art Unit: 3677

Confirmation No.: 1995

Applicant respectfully believes that the present response addresses all issues raised in the most recent Office Action. Applicant has further carefully reviewed the prior art noted in the Office Action, and believes that the claims of the present invention distinguish over all the references, either taken alone or in combination. Based on the above amendments and discussion, Applicant respectfully submits that the application is now in condition for allowance, and earnestly solicits notice to that effect. The Examiner is encouraged to telephone the undersigned attorney to discuss any matter that would expedite allowance of the present application.

Respectfully submitted,

PAUL GIAMPAVOLO

By: 

Brendan J. Kennedy

Registration No. 41,890

Attorney for Applicant(s)

WEINGARTEN, SCHURGIN,
GAGNEBIN & LEBOVICI LLP
Ten Post Office Square
Boston, MA 02109
Telephone: (617) 542-2290
Telecopier: (617) 451-0313

BJK/mac
325641-1

-20-

WEINGARTEN, SCHURGIN,
GAGNEBIN & LEBOVICI LLP
TEL. (617) 542-2290